

In the claims:

1-17. (canceled)

18. **(currently amended)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis comprising

(i) isolating a compound which is an ERK1 ~~/2 and/~~, ERK2 or JNK inhibitor;

(ii) contacting an adipocyte with the compound of step (i) and TNF- α and determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound of step (i) relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound of step (i), and wherein a similar level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the absence of the compound when tested in the absence of TNF- α , indicates that the compound reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis,

to thereby identify a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis.

19-28. (canceled)

29. **(currently amended)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis comprising

(i) isolating a compound which is an ERK1~~/2~~ or ERK2 inhibitor;

(ii) contacting an adipocyte with the compound of step (i) and TNF- α and determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound of step (i), and wherein a similar level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the absence of the compound when tested in the absence of TNF- α , indicates that the compound reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis,

to thereby identify a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis.

30. **(currently amended)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis comprising

(i) isolating a compound which is a JNK inhibitor;

(ii) contacting an adipocyte with the compound of step (i) and TNF- α and determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound of step (i), and wherein a similar level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the absence of the compound when tested in the absence of TNF- α , indicates that the compound reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis,

to thereby identify a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis.

31. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis comprising

(i) isolating a compound which is a MEK inhibitor;

(ii) contacting an adipocyte with the compound of step (i) and TNF- α and determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound of step (i) relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound of step (i) indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis,

to thereby identify a compound which reduces lipolysis.

32. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces TNF- α induced lipolysis comprising

(i) isolating a compound which is a p38 activator;

(ii) contacting an adipocyte with the compound of step (i) and TNF- α and determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound of step (i) relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound of step (i) indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis,

to thereby identify a compound which reduces lipolysis.

33. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting an adipocyte with a compound which is an ERK 1/2 inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

34. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting an adipocyte with a compound which is a JNK inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

35. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting an adipocyte with a compound which is a MEK inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

36. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting an adipocyte with a compound which is a p38 activator and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

37. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting a fibroblast cell with a compound which is an ERK 1/2 inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

38. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting a fibroblast cell with a compound which is a JNK inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

39. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting a fibroblast cell with a compound which is a MEK inhibitor and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

40. **(withdrawn)** A drug screening method for identifying a compound which reduces lipolysis comprising

(i) contacting a fibroblast cell with a compound which is a p38 activator and an agent which induces lipolysis; and

(ii) determining the level of lipolysis, wherein a lower level of lipolysis in the presence of the compound relative to the level of lipolysis in the absence of the compound indicates that the compound reduces lipolysis.

41. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 33, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

42. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 34, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

43. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 35, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

44. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 36, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

45. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 37, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

46. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 38, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

47. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 39, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

48. **(withdrawn)** The method of claim 40, wherein the agent which induces lipolysis is TNF- α .

49. **(currently amended)** The method of claim ~~18, 29, or 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, or 48~~, wherein said level of TNF- α induced lipolysis is measured by levels of free fatty acid or glycerol in the cell medium.

50-56. (Canceled)

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